



**General Certificate of Secondary Education
June 2011**

Religious Studies B (4055)

Unit 6: Worship and Key Beliefs 40556

Report on the Examination

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Unit 6: Worship and Key Beliefs

General Comments

In the second year of this new specification it was heartening to see that a growing number of candidates are taking this unit. The standard achieved was encouraging and showed that the majority of candidates had been well prepared. The vast majority of candidates completed the required questions in the time allocated and the only rubric infringement was where candidates had attempted more than the four questions (sixteen parts). Some actually answered all twenty-four question-parts.

The number of parts per question was different from last year. There was no evidence that this disadvantaged candidates. In fact, asking them to answer on two religions for six marks in the first part of each question seems to have given them the opportunity to gain a good proportion of the AO1 marks available. The mark scheme for these parts allocated three marks for each religion and so they were in effect two three-mark questions. This is a useful way to examine the knowledge and understanding of two religions that is required in this unit. There is no restriction on the total number of religions used to answer the paper as a whole as long as only the six religions in the specification are used.

Centres should be aware that whole questions on topics will consist of four or five parts, making up a total of 18 marks, 9 marks for AO1 and 9 for AO2. There will always be two AO2 questions, one a 3-mark question and the other a 6-mark question. Marks for individual questions for AO1 may differ from year to year, but, for each whole question, there will always be two or three questions for AO1, totalling 9 marks. Therefore any combination is possible, e.g. 2, 3, 4, or 1, 3, 5, or 3, 3, 3, or 3,6 etc. Whichever combination is chosen will apply to all whole questions on the paper. This enables examiners to examine the AO1 assessment objective in relation to the specification in the most appropriate way, depending on the content being examined from year to year. This is fairer to candidates. It enables technical terms, or more challenging parts of the specification to be examined appropriately and provides candidates with opportunities to write at greater length on issues where there is a greater body of knowledge or explanation available.

Each question part was marked according to the levels of response for either AO1 or AO2. Most candidates performed equally well in writing AO1 and AO2 responses for the three-mark parts. However, the six-mark AO2 questions were generally not answered so well. An extended response is required in order to access the higher levels and many candidates simply did not write enough. Although the majority did consider more than one point of view as they were asked to do, their points were not sufficiently developed in order for them to show 'informed insights' (see levels of response for AO2).

An awareness of the levels of response criteria is helpful for candidates to be well prepared for the exam. They can be seen in the mark scheme or the specimen assessment materials. For the AO1 three or six mark questions, some candidates did not include enough ideas or develop them to obtain the maximum marks. Several were content to make one or two points and then move on to the next question. This also applied to the three mark AO2 questions where many candidates obtained two rather than three marks. Some, however, did develop their answers and so obtained the maximum mark and this included those who gave two points of view. This is not a requirement for a three mark AO2, but those who did, generally wrote more developed answers.

Question 1: Places of Worship

01 was generally answered very well, the only fault being that some candidates wrote responses that were over-long and could have taken time away from other questions. Overall the answers showed a good knowledge and understanding of what is inside places of worship. 02 proved to be a straight-forward question for which candidates were able to provide a wide range of answers. Most of these showed an awareness that believers go to their place of worship for reasons other than worship alone.

Candidates were asked in 03 to respond to the statement, 'Religious buildings do not attract young people'. Unfortunately, there were many candidates who focussed on what went on inside religious buildings rather than the buildings themselves. As this section is entitled 'Places of Worship' (the following section is about 'Worship'), these answers were not within the scope of what could be credited within the mark scheme. The statement in 04 focussed on the importance of places of worship and whether they were valued by people who did not worship in them as well as by those who did. This provoked a wide range of good responses: on the one hand, only worshippers could appreciate the real meaning and purpose of the buildings, while on the other, anyone who lived in the locality could be struck by their beauty. Some, however, strayed into the debate about whether non-worshippers should be allowed to enter places of worship which was not the focus of the question.

Question 2: Worship

The responses to 05 showed a widespread knowledge and understanding of how believers worship at home. However, fewer candidates reached the higher levels of response than on 01 about the place of worship. Generally their answers were less detailed and some were too brief and / or vague to achieve maximum credit. A few responses merely listed things which believers might do such as pray and read the holy book. Even if three or more points are listed in this way, this does not show the sound knowledge and understanding that is required for AO1 level 3. 06 was generally answered well, although a few candidates did not understand the term 'aids to worship' which is mentioned in the specification.

07 provoked a wide range of responses. It was pleasing to see that many candidates had considered the variety of purposes that worship can have, whereas others had thought deeply about the connection between worship and peace. 08 was answered in many different ways, some of which were not anticipated by the mark scheme. These approaches were considered valid providing they focussed on real characteristics of worship. For example, simple worship was often contrasted with difficult or demanding worship and the pros and cons of each were argued.

Question 3: Pilgrimage

This, along with Question 4, was answered by fewer candidates than questions 1 and 2 but more than 5 and 6.

09 was one question for which a proportion of candidates did not have the required knowledge to answer. They wrote instead about the history of places of pilgrimage or the important people associated with them. Only responses that focussed on what pilgrims both see and do at places of pilgrimage received full credit. Generally those who wrote about Lourdes or Makkah gave the best answers. The responses to 10 showed that many candidates had considered the effects of pilgrimage on those who go. The approach of a few, that pointed out pilgrimage can also be disappointing and, therefore, can have a negative effect, was accepted as creditworthy.

11 was generally answered well with most candidates arguing in favour of the statement with good reasons. A number argued that completing the pilgrimage itself must be the best part because that is the purpose of the journey. A few candidates who chose this section, did not

attempt item 12. The question was designed to focus on the value of places of pilgrimage to the religion and to the individual. Most candidates tackled this by linking them to the history of the religion or miraculous events that took place there. On the other hand, they argued, the value of a place of pilgrimage to the individual pilgrim was the same whether the site was a recognised one or not.

Question 4: Origins and Key Beliefs

13 was generally answered well with a relatively high proportion achieving maximum marks. In a few cases there was some confusion between the Christian teaching about purgatory and the Islamic teaching about Barzakh. 14 evoked a wide range of answers, showing that most candidates had considered quite deeply the effects of believing in the afterlife. However, a few candidates did not attempt this item even though they had chosen to answer from the section.

The responses to 15 showed a wide variety of points. Most agreed with the statement but a significant number argued against it, pointing out that believing in God was not important in Buddhism and that the behaviour and practices of the believers were just as, if not more, important. 16 was a question which elicited many good arguments on both sides of the issue. The best answers were those which showed consideration of why the beginning of a religion mattered to believers today and also why it was necessary to adapt to modern life.

Question 5: Practices and Belonging

The answers to item 17 were a wide range from some that were extremely well informed, to others that were vague and lacking in detail. It is clear that there is a lot more to say about dietary laws in some religions than in others. On this occasion it was fairer to candidates to accept answers on Christianity that included teaching on the drinking of alcohol when they did not know enough about Christian food laws to achieve level 3. The point that Christianity does not have strict dietary rules was also creditworthy. 18 was generally well answered. Candidates gave a broad range of thoughtful reasons.

19 was a difficult question for a minority of candidates who did not know the term 'rite of passage' which is in the specification. Some ended up comparing marriage to festivals rather than birth or death ceremonies. This approach was not deemed credit-worthy. 20 provoked a pleasing array of different points which were evaluated well by many candidates. However, some did not pay sufficient attention to the focus on children, and, instead, wrote about the general commercialisation of festivals. While this was a relevant point when used to support the dilution of a festival's meaning for adults, it led some away from the main point.

Question 6: Authority

The fewest number of candidates chose to answer from this section.

21 was generally answered well, but a few candidates did not understand the term 'religious leader' although it is in the specification. Some of these confused it with 'founder' and wrote about Jesus or Muhammad. Again, there were a range of responses, some of which were rather vague and lacking in detail. Those that were no more than a list of things that a religious leader does, did not amount to level 3 responses. The term 'tradition' in 22 was not well understood in spite of the reminder at the start of the question. Consequently, only a fifth of the candidates achieved maximum marks.

23 produced a variety of good responses, most of them agreeing with the statement. Out of all the six mark AO2 items, 24 produced the best answers. The relative importance of the three types of authority was evaluated confidently by many of the candidates suggesting that they had been well prepared in this respect. However, a small minority failed to score any marks because they misunderstood the term 'religious leader' (see above).

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.

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